UNITY.

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Freedom, Fellowship and Character in Religion.

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The Perfect Trust.

BY SAMUEL LONGFELLOW.

It is a good thing for a man to trust himself. It seems to be the ground of all *vir*tues—all *manhoods*. Not to lean upon others; to have a mind of his own, to think his own thoughts, to use his own reason and form his own beliefs, to see things with his own eyes, and not with other people's, to use his own conscience and stand by it;—these things we expect of a man. We say that he must have a will of his own, must come to his own decisions in conduct, and do what is right and good for him to do, not waiting for others and following the herd. He must throw himself with confidence upon the work he has to do. And though he may make mistakes in all these things he must educate himself by these mistakes. He must have his own resources in trouble, be a comforter to himself, and bear his own burden. All these things we think essential to the manly character (and in the manly I include now the true womanly).

Self-distrust, on the other hand, is an element of weakness. How many a man has gone through life hindered and hampered by it, perpetually discouraged and dissatisfied, his work half done, his faculties and his opportunities half used!

But a man is not alone in the world. However self-sustained, and self-sufficing, and self-reliant we may be, we are in the midst of a society or community, with which we are related by

a great many ties and bonds and sympathies of feeling and of need. However independent we may be, we are all dependent. However faithfully we may attend to our own work, and take care of ourselves, we have a good deal to do for others, and there is a good deal that they must do for us. And for all the things that we cannot do, or do not choose to do, for ourselves, we have to trust others, as they must trust us. And we find that we may safely trust them. With all deductions and exceptions, on the whole, men and women are trustworthy; they are not truthful enough nor faithful enough, but we may on the whole rely upon their word and work. The general standard is not high enough, yet in general there are more things well done than badly done of those which we have to trust to others. So our trust has a ground in human nature, and with fit precautions will not be betrayed. We can trust others about as well as we can trust ourselves. It has a ground in human nature, not only as an outward necessity but as an interior impulse. All our moral sentiments, by whatever stages of experience they may have reached their present state, must have begun in a primitive tendency, and are now, as they have been for ages, instinctive and intuitive in men; if a long acquisition, yet long ago a nature. So with this impulse of trust, under all exceptions so spontaneous and natural in human hearts. And what a joy and a solace and an inspiration it is; among the sweetest and best we have, and among the most invigorating. Think of its place among our affections. Think of its presence in our homes. In a true marriage what fulness of it, what confiding, what surrender! The trust of children, how confiding, how entire, at times, is father's knowledge and mother's power: an instinct, in part an illusion; but what a comfort, what a safeguard, how precious a blessing! The trust of a mother in her son, through all his wandering and sin; her confidence that there is good in him yet, and that he will come through all,—there may be illusion in that, too; but how often is the trust justified, how often does it create that which it desires and prays for,—itself a redeeming power!

But we live immersed not only in society and its net-work of dependences. We are immersed in physical nature; its currents stream through us and flow all around us. If we resist them too strenuously they overpower and drown us. If we know them and obey them and trust them, they uphold us, refresh us and bear us on. If we work with them, they work well for us; if we work against them our work will not stand. If we build a wall too thin for the weight of the roof, or if we build it of poor material, or out of the perpendicular, we know that it will fall. No prayer can hold it up; no superhuman Will will intervene to prevent the natural consequence—not even if precious lives be beneath it. Men are not so foolish as to make that prayer. But they do make prayers equally foolish, as if their entreaty could stay, or persuade the Almighty to stay, the natural results of a violated law. When a guilty neglect makes a foul city the breeding-place of pestilence, the fever is the natural consequence of the violation of a law of health. When it comes we must do what we can by human sympathy and human knowledge to alleviate and end it. But do not let us think for a moment that it is anything else but irrational and irreligious to expect a Divine intervention to protect men from the consequences of their own criminal negligence, or that of their neighbors. No, not though a whole nation, at the proclamation of its head, should unite in the prayer. Our only prayer can be that the whole nation may take the bitter and costly lesson as a warning for future faithfulness and obedience to God's laws of health; and the answer to that prayer, as of so many others, is how largely in our own hands!

In all the trust which we put in other people, in all the trust we put in the force and laws of nature, there is a surrender of our will, a giving-up of ourselves, a submission and an acceptance. In every case of trust we say "not my will but thine be done: not as I wilt but as thou wilt." We say it virtually to those to whom we entrust the care of our business, the raising of our harvests, the carrying of ourselves and our

goods over land or sea, the gaining of knowledge for us; in all the cases in which we put things into the hands of others, because we do not wish to do them ourselves, or because we do not know how, or because we have not the power or the means needed. We put ourselves into their keeping, we accept what they do and what they say. We may tell them what we want to have done, but we do not tell them how to do it. As to that we have no will, because we have no knowledge or no power; we simply trust. I take my watch to the watchmaker, I put myself on the train or the steamer; I do not undertake to say how the one is to be repaired, or how the other is to be engineered, or navigated. I know that the interference of my will would do harm and not good. I surrender, I submit, I accept, I trust, and all comes out well.

So in using the forces of nature we simply submit to their law; we have no will in the matter save to accept the conditions which we had no choice in making. We turn the water upon our wheels, or the steam into our cylinder, but we do not will that the water shall fall or that the steam shall expand and press. We simply submit and trust, without question.

Of course in all these cases, and the many others which will occur to you, we do not trust altogether blindly; we do not trust without reason, without knowledge, or testimony, or experience, on which to ground our trust, our submission. We do not give up our wills except to that which we believe to be wiser or stronger than we. But we trust *where we do not see.*

So our life, which is half activity, is half submission. It is half will, and half trust, or *willing surrender of will.*

But I have to speak of another trust which, however, as we shall see, is largely involved in those I have spoken of; I mean, trust in God.

As to the being of God, I know that men differ; some deny, and some neither affirm nor deny, waiting for proof. But the vast majority of men, in all ages of which we have any history, have believed in a Power and a Will beyond the human, in God or gods. We may believe things that are not

proved,—we constantly do so—if there are good grounds for belief and if the weight is on that side, even though it does not amount to a demonstration; there is a practical certainty, an assurance and a confidence which is undisturbed by the doubts, and which we live and act by; as in the case of our own existence or the existence of the outward world. There is something in most of us which is singularly and intensely drawn to this belief in God. Not so much by our understandings, although they justify our belief, but through our spiritual nature—a something in us beyond our understanding and which acts powerfully and instinctively in this direction—call it our imagination, wonder, reverence,—call it our hearts—something real and deep in us it is. Our belief is partly education, no doubt, but the education finds something inborn in us to take hold of and draw out: and the faith inculcated seems native and akin to us, and not foreign or hard to receive. So it is, that the denial or doubt of God chills us, the affirmation of him is as warm life-blood to our hearts. To this faith we always come back, from all doubts and all difficulties; we cannot answer all objections but they do not disturb the depth of our assurance.

Beyond our trust in ourselves, beyond our trust in our fellow men, there is then this trust in God. And myriads of human souls have borne witness to its preciousness, its tenderness, its healing, invigoration and peace. This trust in God is also a submission of our will, a yielding, a surrender. It leads and supports us where we cannot see. But it is not a blind trust; it has its reasonable ground, in testimony, in experience. If it does not have this, the trust becomes superstitious or fanatical. Our trust in God is a trust in One whom we believe to be mightier, wiser, better than ourselves. And just in proportion to the heartiness and thoroughness of our belief, will be the perfectness of our trust and the fulness of the satisfaction we shall win from it. And then, in return, our trust will give us the experiences which will confirm our belief, and so the two will go hand-in-hand. Every time that we willingly

surrender our will to the Perfect Wisdom and Perfect Strength, we know more of that Wisdom and that Power; just as we gain a knowledge of the forces of nature by trusting them and finding that they do not fail. But our trust in God must be a real, and not a verbal one; it must be one that asks to be guided because it means to follow. You do not take your trusty and experienced guide in the Adirondacks or the Alps, and then dictate the way yourself. You leave the path to him, and without question follow, glad to be relieved of the anxiety of choosing and deciding where you have no knowledge. If you interfere much he would be likely to say: "Am I the guide, or you?" But it seems to me that a great part of men's prayers are dictations to God, not submission or surrender. Our prayer should be: "Thy will be done; help me to know it, to accept it, to conform to it, to do it; not as I will, but as thou wilt." Is it not too often rather this: "My will be done, and wilt thou, O God, see that it *is* done." In this spirit there is no trust, though there may be words of seeming submission. We may, indeed, in our prayer of communion with God, bring our wishes, plans, wills, before Him; but it is in order that, seen in the light of that divinest thought and perfect righteousness, we may know if they are worthy to be done. But the essence of all prayer is, "Thy will be done; I come to do Thy will."

Our trust in God easily allies itself with the other trusts of which I spoke, and in part identifies itself with them. Our trust in ourself, what is it but confidence in the powers which God has given us,—the reason, the conscience, the affections, the will—which certainly *we* did not create. Even if it be maintained, with the modern school, that these powers are but the accumulated growth of long ages of human experience, it still remains that the law of that growth and the possibility of it in these directions, are things which humanity did not create.

Our trust in ourselves is justified only in our use of our faculties in their orderly direction, which is the divine purpose in them. And our highest trust in ourselves is the trust in

the highest and best in ourselves; and somehow we always feel in these highest activities of thought, feeling and will, that a higher than ourselves is working powerfully within us. It is an inspiration, we say. As, when a brisk walk on one of these clear autumn days brings all our vitality into action, and every sense seems kindled into fulness, we know that the light which floods our eye, and the air which fills our lungs, and the electric freshness which makes our nerves keen and our muscles tense—that these, though in us, are yet from beyond us.

So with our trust in others; in their truth, their fidelity, their kindness. It is a trust in a human nature which did not create itself, though it may have educated itself. It is a trust in a spiritual *law*, a moral *order* in humanity. With all human freedom, and even caprice, there is a general steadfastness of human action upon which we may, as we do, rely. And this spiritual law and moral order, are they not the presence of God?

That our trust in the forces and laws of Nature is a trust in God, is beginning to be generally recognized by religious men. We have learned to think of God,—as other than Nature, indeed,—but not as separated or apart from it; rather as its indwelling and pervading life; its force we count a manifestation of His will, its laws as the presence of His thought: a Divine working of a Divine Idea perpetually creating, from the beginning until now, and leading on the evolution of its forms. For God's will in everything we have learned to look into its nature and constitution; and to find our obedience to his will in the right use of all things to their fitting end. So in trusting Nature, the farmer, the engineer, the mechanic, and all of us, are trusting God—unconsciously and involuntarily perhaps. Well for all if they know in Whom they have believed.

But beyond this trust in God as involved in Nature and in human nature, there is, it seems to me, another trust in him, more delicate and more intimate; so delicate, so intimate, that it is difficult to speak rightly of it. Better than to speak of it is it to feel and experience it. I will call it our trust in Him *personally*, if you will not misunderstand the word; it is a

trust in Him—not in his manifestations, but in the immediate nearness of our spirits to Him, the Spirit. It is the spiritual contact of our existence with Him, who is the Essence; of our minds with Him who is the truth; of our consciences with Him who is Righteousness; of our affections with Him who is Love; of our wills with Him who is the Supreme Will. It is the touch and thrill of soul with Soul; it is the peace that passes understanding: it is the hidden strength; it is the light that eye hath not seen. Enfolded, uplifted, in these everlasting arms, we are at rest and all is well. From that height and shelter, we look down upon the dangers that terrified us, the anxieties that distressed us, the annoyances that fretted us, the griefs that wounded us, the duties that burdened, the disappointments that disheartened, the temptations that betrayed, and we see how small and transient they are in the light of the Divine purpose, before the strength and calm of a soul stayed upon the Eternal. The very wickedness and miseries of the world which weigh so upon our hearts and our consciences, and are so far beyond our power to remedy, from that height and in that illumination seem not so intolerable, not so hopeless—the crude and bitter fruit that time and growth, and human sympathy and divine good will shall ripen and perfect into beauty and sweetness.

A thousand blessings there are that God gives us through our own activity and on that condition only. And well it is for us to keep Him in mind and in our trust, behind all our activity, as that Power and Goodness which works through human wills, and only in accordance with which can human wills work to successful issue.

But there are times when our activities must slacken or stop. There are times when we can do no more, can see no further, cannot even think beyond. There are times when we can only wait and trust—or despair. We must float or we shall sink. It is in vain to struggle. Then, when our own power is ended, and we have done our part, we may rest, and feel that what remains is in another hand. As the farmer, his field tilled, sowed and

weeded, may throw himself at noon-day or evening upon the grassy slope, knowing that it is not for him to bring the harvest, but that he may safely trust that it will come; as the swimmer, fatigued with his exertions, stays his arm and lets himself float in passive surrender to the upholding water, and drinking in the beauty and the life and the repose about him, seems to become a part of the nature in which he is immersed and to whose unbroken law he trusts;—as the child, hurt or frightened or tired out, runs to throw himself into his mother's arm, and in that safeguard, hushes his sobs, and heals his hurt and loses his fear; falls, perhaps, asleep or runs off again comforted to his work or play; as walking in some dark road at night we hold by the strong hand of the friend who knows the way and has a keener sight than ours, and surrendering our will, do not choose our path but simply follow over the bridge that spans the roaring torrent, till we reach our home;—so must we often, so are we often glad, to stop from our activities, our work and our duty, and rest, leaving results to God. So may we often stay our striving and our struggling, and our swimming against the current, and simply float on the ocean-bosom of God, sure of being sustained by its unbroken law, till we seem a part of that beautiful Providence in which we are immersed. So must we turn from our hurts and our fears and our tired wills, to rest in the sheltering arms of Eternal Law and Love; and still our tremblings and our tears upon the heart of God. So must we in those dark hours when we cannot see our way, surrender our wills and hopes and plans into His keeping, who can do better things for us than we know how to ask; and putting our hands in His, ask only that we may be guided.

> Lead *thou* me on, I do not ask to see
> The distant way, one step enough for me.

We are strong sometimes in willing: sometimes we are strong in trusting—in willing to surrender our wills. If we can do this heartily, then calamities and misfortunes lose half their bitterness. Then grief and bereavement and the shadow of death and the lonely heart that misses its life-long reliance—

these are filled with light. It is not that we expect God to help us by any special interference or will of his, directed to our special need. It is that we become conscious of that perpetual and constant good will and will to good, in which we, with all, are embosomed, that *Law* of God's providence, whose resources are infinite for more than all human needs. Men think to change the will of God, or to direct it upon themselves by their prayers. If they could, what a chaos the world would be! Ah, the only ground of our prayers, the only ground of our trust, is the unchangeableness of God. We reach out in the tempest and the wreck to lay hold upon that *which cannot move*, and so we are safe. The more we come to think of God's will as not a series of separate volitions, but as an unbroken law, perfect and all-embracing the more entire will be our trust. We shall cease to ask for things He will not do, or to look for ways of help He will not use. Our whole prayer will be to know His Law and into that Law to sink and become at one with it. "Not as I will but as Thou wilt." Teach me Thy will, to do or to bear!

"Blindfolded and alone I stand
With unknown thresholds on each hand:
The darkness deepens as I grope,
Afraid to fear, afraid to hope.
Yet this one thing I learn to know
That doors are opened as I go,
Burdens are lifted or are laid,
By some great law, unseen and still,
Some unknown purpose to fulfil,
Not as *I* will.

"Blindfolded and alone I wait;
Loss seems too bitter, gain too late;
Too heavy grows the burdening load,
Too few the helpers on the road;
The joy too weak, the grief too strong,
And years and days so long, so long!
Yet this one thing I learn to know
Each day more surely as I go,
That I am glad that good and ill
By changeless *Law* are ordered still,—
Not as *I* will."

DEVOTIONAL READINGS.

II.

GOD.

Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? Behold I go forward but he is not there: and backward, but I cannot perceive him: on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him. But he knoweth the way that I take!—*Job.*

The reason which can be reasoned is not the Eternal Reason. The name which can be named is not the Eternal Name. Would you go before it you cannot see its face: would you go behind it, you cannot see its back. If you look at it, there is nothing to fill the eye: if you listen to it, there is nothing to fill the ear. But if you use it, it is inexhaustible! Great Reason is all-pervading: in love it nourisheth all things.—*Lao-Tsze* (*Chinese.*)

Who thinks that Brahma is not comprehended,—by him he is comprehended. Who thinks that Brahma is comprehended—he does not know him.—*Upanishad* (*Hindoo.*)

But God is! a holy will that abides,
Though the human will may falter;
High over both space and time it rides,
The high thought that will never alter:
And while all things in change eternal roll,
It endures through change a motionless soul.—*Schiller.*

God appears in the best thought, the truth of speech, and the sincerity of action, giving through his pure spirit health, prosperity, devotion and eternity to this universe. He is the Father of all truth. —*Zendavesta.*

The religion of humanity does not satisfy the soul. The religion of humanity can never exclude the sentiment awakened by that which is behind humanity and behind all other things,—a Power of which humanity is but a small and fugitive product.—*Herbert Spencer.*

Since last century, definitions of God have been vanishing, idols have been tumbling, symbols falling away, trinities dissolving, personalities waning and losing themselves; but the Being has been steadily coming forward from the background, and taking possession of every inch of matter and of mind.—*O. B. Frothingham.*

Whither can I go from thy Spirit? or whither can I flee from thy presence? If I should ascend into heaven, thou art there; if I should make my bed in hell behold thou art there. Should I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there thy hand would lead me and thy right hand would hold me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.—*Hebrew Paslm.*

Soar thou beyond all limit to the roof of the universe, thou shalt behold one tile of God's dwelling,—one tile, no more. Ride thou on for eternity through the glowing heavens, mounted on thy fantasy, thou shalt not advance beyond his threshold. All nations and languages repeat the name of God. Yet cannot his praise be duly expressed by mortal till the dumb man shall be eloquent and sticks and stone find a voice.—*Anwari* (*Mohammedan.*)

ADORATION.

Thou—so far, we grope to grasp thee!
Thou—so near, we cannot clasp thee!
Thou—so wise, our prayers are heedless,
Thou—so loving, they are needless!
Soul of all, and moving centre
Of each moment's life we enter;
Through benignant law connecting
Best with best, and all perfecting!
Though all human races claim thee,
Thought and language fail to name thee!
Mortal lips be dumb before thee,
Only silence may adore thee!—*C. P. Cranch.*

HYMNS.

I.

Great God how infinite art thou!
  How frail and weak are we!
Let the whole race of creatures bow,
  And pay their praise to thee.

Thy throne eternal ages stood,
  Ere seas or stars were made;
Thou art the ever-living God,
  Were all the nations dead.

Our lives through varying scenes are drawn,
  And vexed with trifling cares,
While thine eternal thought moves on
  Thine undisturbed affairs.—*Watts.*

Sunday School Lessons.

CORNER-STONES OF CHARACTER.

BY MRS. K. G. WELLS.

V. SELF-CONTROL.

"How happy is he born or taught, . . .
Whose passions not his masters are!"

"Lord of himself, though not of lands,
And having nothing, yet hath all."

What is Self-Control? Mastery of one's self. The way in which one acts externally and thinks and feels internally, is one's self. What an amount to control! But if you cannot be your own master, you will be your own slave. Sometimes it is easier to control actions than feelings, sometimes feelings rather than actions. To be complete master, *both* must be controlled. Self-control is self-restraint, i.e. the ability to impose wise limitations upon one's self, to hold back from doing the wrong or silly thing, whip in hand. What is the whip? A *strong conscience*, that won't let one have any peace except by minding the right. As one's self has to make one's self mind, self-control is hard to obtain; and when we think we have it, the want of it often surprises us.

How is it to be obtained? By biting your lips when you want to be, and begging pardon when you have been, impudent; not fighting when you think you can't "stand" something, (a brave boy rarely fights,) Prov. xvi. 32; counting ten, when angry, before paying back; and counting the costs of all wrong doing. By not relying too much on your hopes and so failing to take pains to acquire what you want, as in school-examinations; by keeping away the desire for play till recess or nursery-hours come. (Children would study better, if they thus restrained themselves.) By not yielding to fears, and so losing courage; by checking snubs, sarcasm and unkindness to others; by not doing little mean things to another, just because you are out of sorts, or assuming a patronizing or indifferent tone as a make-shift for actual crossness. By not being cross when sick, and not making temperament or inheritance an excuse for little striving. (Enlarge upon this point with the elder children; such excuse is cowardly, fatal to effort, sets a miserable example, and results in transmission of less moral strength to the next generation, who should inherit even more richly from us, their past, than we have from ours.)

What does Self-Control effect? Not immediate happiness; it oftener brings disappointment of a plan, and seems unnecessary; but patience with one's self and others, bravery, superiority to circumstances, contentment, power to work, and ability to bear the joy and sorrow of life;—thus, freedom.

Instances of Self-Control: let the children give some, e.g., Washington and Valley Forge, Newton and his dog, Casabianca, Ida Lewis, present different forms of self-control.

To God, our self-control is due, that by the subordination of other feelings we may more desire to do right and to love Him. **To one's self,** because this is not only a corner-stone, but the rock out of which the whole character up to the very top has to be built. **To others,** because as children, still more when older, we shall take our part either as leaders or assistants in helping mankind, and unless self-controlled, we can neither govern nor follow others long.

CORNER-STONES OF CHARACTER.

BY MRS. K. G. WELLS.

VI. PROMPTNESS.

"The flighty purpose never is o'ertook,
Unless the deed go with it."

What depends upon Promptness? Health, enough time for every duty and many pleasures, home-comfort, success at school, in travelling, in business, in life. People who are good and bright, yet always too late, will generally be at the bottom of the ladder of successful energy, for promptness leads to promotion and success. The punctual store-boy becomes the clerk, often the partner, and the punctual girl becomes the reliable business-woman. Those who soonest know the market-values make most money; the general who quickly marshals his forces wins the battle. Some people are never ready, even for a good time; the train goes out of the depot as they come in, the pleasure-party hurries them off, only half-fixed for it.

Promptness first formed as a *habit* becomes a *principle*, and so ennobles the wearisomeness of attending to a detail. The **habit** begins in babyhood by minding quickly, not making a fuss about what must be done and, the sooner done, the better. Count how often in a day a child can always be prompt: (1) when awake in the morning, by getting right up, not yawning in bed; (2) being punctual at school; (3) not lingering on the way home and so coming with unbrushed hair to dinner, or, if the hair is smooth, finding the steak cold; (4) starting at once on the afternoon's play; (5) coming back in time to thoroughly learn the school or music-lesson; (6) going to bed at the appointed time. Six times a day, seven days in a week: $6 \times 7 = 42$ times of prompt punctuality, i.e., being quick and glad to be punctual.

Promptness now becomes a **principle,** is the clock-work guiding one's life, and unpunctuality becomes a kind of robbery of one's own, and a sure robbery of others', time. The principle clinches the purpose by carrying it into action at once. It sees that if a thing is right to do now, it is wrong to do it by and by. What is the use in meaning to do and never doing? One's own powers for work are thus wasted. freshness and energy of feeling are lost. Not only feeling, but the actual opportunity, goes. A minute cannot be recovered; the life that might be saved or benefited by speedy help is either lost or suffers.

Want of Promptness is caused by love of ease, laziness, carelessness or absent-mindedness. The first two causes are cowardly and selfish, the last two are wretched excuses for unpunctuality. No brave child will try to shield himself under an excuse; for excuse in itself implies that the reason offered as excuse was not necessity.

The obligation to be prompt because of **God, others,** and **ourselves,** resolves itself into the general reason that our **helpfulness** is increased by our promptness. We shall help God and others almost in proportion to the quickness and zeal with which that help is given; the aid offered by an unwilling, slow spirit defeats its own object. We help ourselves by the determination that it gives to our character to do our work at once.

Let the children think of proverbs about punctuality.

Notes and News.

The New Head-quarters.—In securing a room in the Dore Block, cor. State and Madison Sts., we hope to accomplish much more than to secure a more convenient business office for "UNITY," however desirable that may be. We hope to make room No. 57 a popular head-quarters for all the Liberal Work of the "Freedom, Fellowship and Character" sort in the West. Here we expect to set up the "Tool Chest for Liberal Sunday Schools" mentioned in No. 2. Here, as fast as possible, will be accumulated for examination and sale, the literature of our free faith, the tracts and publications of the American Unitarian Association. Here will be kept files of our leading magazines and papers. From here the missionary work of the Western Unitarian Conference will radiate. This will be the home of the Chicago Woman's Liberal Religious Union. To their energy, taste and liberality belongs largely the credit of establishing this head-quarters. The room will be in charge of Miss F. L. ROBERTS, Ass't Secretary of the Western Unitarian Conference, and Business Agent of "UNITY." She will be glad to receive the friends from all parts of the West. Take the Elevator at the Madison St. entrance. The latch string will be out from 9 A. M. to 4 P. M. Welcome all! —J. LL. J.

Word comes from Rev. F. E. KITTREDGE at Muskegon, Mich., that the Unitarian Society there are repairing their church, raising up its foundation, re-roofing, painting, frescoing, etc., which will give them one of the best edifices in the city. As a result of Mr. KITTREDGE'S preaching in Charlevoix, during his Summer vacation, a Unitarian Society was organized in that thriving town of the lumber region. No Unitarian sermon had ever been preached in the place before. The new society propose to meet weekly, carry on a Sunday School, have sermons read from UNITY (thirteen copies of which are taken in the place), and next Summer have three months of preaching by such ministers as can be induced to go there to spend a few weeks of vacation. The men and women who are concerned in the movement are said to be, in every way, among the best and most influential people of the town.

The Autumn meeting of the Illinois Fraternity of Unitarian and other Liberal Societies, will be held at Princeton, in the Congregational Church, Oct. 29–31. We understand that Dr. EDWARDS, pastor

of the church, will give the Conference an address of welcome. For a report of the Michigan Conference recently held at Charlotte, we must ask our readers to wait till our next issue.

The Cause in Indiana.—In the little church at Hobart, there was organized, Sept. 28 and 29, the Indiana Conference of Unitarian and Independent Societies, with the following officers: WM. H. RIEFENBERG, of Hobart, President; REV. GEO. CHAINEY, of Evansville, and MRS. MARTHA N. MCKAY, of Indianapolis, Vice-Presidents; REV. J. H. CROOKER, of La Porte, Secretary; A. E. Letts, of Valparaiso, Treasurer. This session, lasting two days, was one of peculiar interest. The sermons by Messrs. HERFORD, SUNDERLAND, FORBUSH, JONES and CROOKER were well received, but these were unimportant compared with the great interest that centres round the little church and its devoted band, the first Unitarian Church built in the State, carried to a successful completion by a well organized little society, which conducts a thriving Sunday School with only passing ministerial help. On Sunday morning, $465 was raised from pockets which had frequently been emptied before. But this sum came willingly, because with the timely donation of $300 from the American Unitarian Association, and $20 from the Church of the Messiah, Chicago, (the only outside help given,) it paid the last dollar of indebtedness on the church, $3,000 having been raised at home in four years. The self-sacrifice which this has called for, made very beautiful the little brick chapel in the woods, and even the unresonant call of its bell made sweet music when we remembered that it was cast at home, the composition of which was made from the donations of silver spoons, pewter teapots, copper boilers, brass kettles and old cow bells, gathered from the neighborhood. All this, with the earnest utterances by laymen as well as ministers at the conference meetings, the prolonged conversations, and the closing platform meeting of Sunday evening, where half a dozen papers were read and addresses were made by lay men and lay women, adds another denial to the old charge that Liberal religion is cold, unsympathetic and non-communicative. Notwithstanding that it is the almost universal testimony of ministers and laymen who have made the passage from the old into the new faith, that they have come out of chilliness into warmth, out of formalism into heartiness; notwithstanding that we believe it to be an unquestioned fact that religion, both in its theological and experimental phases, is the welcome theme in the family and social fireside, among the believers of the Liberal faith, yet not infrequently do we find those of our fellowship joining in the stereotype charges of our foes indicated above. To all this the glowing warmth of the meetings at Hobart gives one more effectual denial, and if we mistake not, was the forerunner of many others to follow. Indiana is yet to be heard from.—J. LL. J.

The Saratoga Meeting!—The Eighth National Unitarian Conference, which met at Saratoga last month, was the largest, and probably, taken all in all, the most satisfactory meeting of the kind ever held in this country. There were 531 accredited delegates present, representing 220 parishes; while the attendance from a distance, of persons who as truly, though not in an official way, represented the Unitarian churches of the country, swelled the company to more than 2000. The United States Hotel, which had been secured for the uses of the Conference, was filled, accomodating some 1200 persons, and affording most admirable facilities for making acquaintances, and for general social intercourse. Of course a very large proportion of the delegates were from the East. Chicago, St. Louis, Louisville, Janesville, Wis., Marietta and Yellow Springs, Ohio, and a few other places west of Buffalo, but only a few were represented. Rev. Mr. HERFORD, of Chicago, preached the Introductory Sermon, which we gave our readers in the last number of UNITY. The three longest and most notable papers of the Conference were by Rev. JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE, of Boston, on "The New Theology," Prof. C. C. EVERETT, Dean of the Divinity School of Harvard University, on "The New Ethics," and Hon. GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS, of New York, on "Morals and Politics." The papers were as different as the men from whom they came, but all were up to the high expectations of the Conference. Rev. J. L. JONES reported in behalf of the Western Conference, in a paper of great interest and power, doing more than perhaps had ever been done before by any single effort of any of our Western men, to create among the Unitarians of the East, interest and confidence in the Western missionary work. An evening of interesting platform speaking was given to the subject of Denominational Schools. Perhaps the warmest discussion of the Conference occurred over the motion to appoint a Fellowship Committee, or committee to examine the moral, and other standing, of ministers coming to our ranks from Orthodox connections. Another subject that called out a stirring debate, was a resolution asking the American Unitarian Association to appoint and support three missionaries in the West and South, and pledging the co-operation of the churches represented in the Conference in raising the funds for the same. Resolutions were adopted with much unanimity naming $50,000 as the amount that the churches should endeavor to raise the coming year for denominational purposes, to be expended by the Association. It was voted also to make an effort to raise $15,000 within six months to complete the needed endowment of the Meadville Theological School. Another resolution that was passed very heartily, was one to encourage the preparation of manuals and other books of public and private devotion.

One of the most gratifying features of the Conference was the

fact that it was held in the Methodist church, which had been freely proffered for the occasion. Only a very few years ago such a thing would have been an imposibility.

On Friday, some 300 ladies assembled in the large parlor of the United States Hotel and set on foot a movement to raise a missionary fund by one dollar contributions from the Unitarian women of the country. Another indication that the enthusiasm of the Conference was shared in heartily by the fair sex, is the information that comes to us that a Unitarian lady of Boston in response to General ARMSTRONG's stirring plea for Indian education, made an offering for the same of $2,000.

Boston Notes.—A universally lamented death is that of Rev. Dr. THOS. WORCESTER, the eminent New-Churchman of Boston, in the eighty-third year of his age. He was the son of the Unitarian divine, reformer, and lexicographer, NOAH WORCESTER, and was early converted to the doctrine of Swedenborg. For many years he was the minister of the New Jerusalem Church in Boston, the largest of this persuasion in the world; for thirty years or more the president of the New Church General Conference, and more recently head of their theological school. His zeal in this cause was ceaseless. His three sons are ministers of the New Church, and his brother and several of his classmates were converted to it by his earnest reasoning and appeal. Better than all, he was a man of pure, strong and saintly character, deeply beloved by all without regard to their church connection, for his gentleness, liberality and piety.

Little or nothing more is heard here about Rev. Mr. MURRAY's great scheme for a Christian Union Church. It is doubtful whether he will continue his Music Hall services, which have been so popular. He has quite a large income from his lectures, books, etc., is the proprietor and editor of the *Golden Rule*, and owns a fine farm in Connecticut, on which his famous colts are trained. Mrs. MURRAY, a woman of a great deal of talent, has recently, we believe, graduated with honor from a medical school, and will practice her profession.

This word about Mrs. MURRAY prompts us to speak of the wife of Rev. S. J. BARROWS, pastor of the First Church, Dorchester. Mrs. BARROWS was for some time a Baptist missionary in India and other Oriental countries. Entering heartily into her husband's purpose to fit himself for the Liberal ministry, she made herself an expert shorthand writer, and undertook for herself the study of medicine, graduating at the University of Vienna with honor as an oculist. She does not at present follow her profession, at least not for gain, but as a devoted help-meet in her husband's parochial cares, an inspirer and sharer of his ideals and mental labors, and an occasional writer and lecturer in good causes, she newly illustrates the capacities of her

sex and what a blessed thing it is to be a strong-minded and brave-hearted woman.—QUIDAM.

Personals.—Rev. ROBERT LAIRD COLLIER has resigned his pastorate in Boston and gone again to England, where it is thought he will take up his residence permanently.——Rev. OSCAR CLUTE has removed from Keokuk, Iowa, to Iowa City, the seat of the Iowa State University, an institution which is rapidly advancing toward the front rank of Western Colleges. It already musters some five or six hundred students.——Rev. J. T. SUNDERLAND has accepted a call to Ann Arbor, Mich.——Rev. Dr. LOTHROP of Boston has been supplying the pulpit of Unity Church, Chicago, for several Sundays, during Mr. COLLYER's absence.——The other Sunday Prof. SWING had Mr. BEECHER for a hearer at McVicker's Theatre, in this city. At the end of the sermon Mr. SWING announced that he had a dear friend in the congregation who would make the closing prayer, which Mr. BEECHER, rising in his box, forthwith proceeded to do.——Rev. GEO. W. COOKE has preached two Sundays, recently, at Indianapolis.——Mrs. D. L. SHOREY read a paper at the recent Chicago meeting of the Illinois Social Science Association, on the "Value and Dangers of Personal Leadership in Social Movements."—Rev. J. H. CROOKER, pastor of the Unitarian Church in La Porte, has a regular Wednesday evening meeting of his people for religious, intellectual and social culture, with a steady attendance of from forty to sixty persons.——We are informed that Rev. F. L. HOSMER, Mr. BLAKE's predecessor at Quincy, sailed from Europe October 1st, homeward bound.——Mrs. CELIA P. WOOLLEY, well known in Chicago literary circles, and Chicago correspondent of the *Register*, is back in the city again, and at her post of work, after some months of severe illness and absence.——Rev. GEO. BACHELOR of Salem, Mass., has been preaching for the Cleveland Unitarians. Is it not high time for these good people to "arise" once more "and shine"—to "put on the beautiful garment" of a new church, which they are so well able to build, and, generally, to proceed to live and do the work for rational religion, which they are so well able to do, and which so sorely needs to be done in Cleveland and Northern Ohio?——Rev. A. THOMAS of Memphis, Tenn., the esteemed and accomplished German Liberal preacher, who wrote the article on the German Free Churches which we published in No. 9 of the *Pamphlet Mission*, fell a victim to the yellow fever. His death will be greatly felt, not only in his own city, but among all the Germans of the country who are interested in advancing the cause of rational Christianity among their countrymen on this side the sea.

Literary.—Rev. BROOKE HERFORD's new book, "The Story of Religion in England," is for sale at the rooms of the American Unitarian Association, No. 7 Tremont Place, Boston. The *Register* says

of it: "It is destined to reproduce in America the interest it has excited on the other side of the Atlantic where it was published."——The price of Mr. SUNDERLAND's new book, "What is the Bible?" is $1.00 instead of $1.25, as announced in our last issue.——The "Tool Chest," or list of lessons, books of reference, cards, and material for Liberal Sunday School work, prepared by Rev. J. L. JONES and published in the Sunday School number of UNITY, will be revised and enlarged, and printed as a leaflet by the Western Sunday School Soc'y. It is the most valuable list of helps for Liberal S. S. workers we have ever seen. ——Washington University, of which Dr. ELIOT is president, founded and built up by the Unitarians of St. Louis, has grown to be perhaps second in importance among the colleges of the West. It has now about twelve hundred students.——A trust company has been formed in Boston, consisting among others of the widow and daughter of the late Prof. AGASSIZ, Mrs. HORACE MANN, Miss E. P. PEABODY, and GEO. B. EMERSON, to receive donations for the publication of a standard library of the works of FROEBEL.——*Sunday Afternoon* has an identification of Mordecai Cohen in "Daniel Deronda," with Emanuel Deutsch, the writer on the Talmud. To which we say, Oh!

Three of Rev. GEO. W. COOKE's valuable papers on "The Evolution of Religion," have already appeared in the *Evolution.* The subjects treated, so far, are the "Genesis and Development of Religious Beliefs," the "Growth of Religious Ideas," and the "Genesis of the Hebrew Faith." These papers are packed and crowded (sometimes we think almost painfully so,) with facts gleaned from the latest and highest authorities, such as Tylor, Lubbock, Spencer, Tiele, Max Mueller, Oort, Davidson, Kuenen and Ewald. We do not think that anywhere can persons who desire to get information on these interesting subjects, find so much that is valuable in so small compass as in these papers of Mr. COOKE. Other papers are to follow on the "Evolution of Christianity," the "Sympathy of Religions," the "Origin and Sanctions of Morality," and the "Scientific Basis of Religion, and its Fundamental Ideas." Perhaps we ought to suggest that, to our mind, Mr. COOKE hardly does himself justice by *quoting* so largely as he does from his authorities. His quotations are admirable, and made with much skill, but they are too numerous for the best effect upon his readers. Nor are they at all necessary for a writer of Mr. COOKE's ability. We do not think the writer makes a quotation, the ideas of which he could not express as well in his own language, and, for his immediate purpose, generally better. But this is a small matter. The papers show not only that their author is a vast reader, and of the best books, but also that he has power to gather together the most significant facts and weave them with a woof of fresh thought into something new and valuable.

As to the positions taken by Mr. COOKE, they are at least hinted by the titles which he has given to his papers, and by the fact that he quotes most largely from such writers as we have named above. Perhaps no brief quotation from what he has written will better indicate the general drift of his thought than the following, from his third paper, on the "Genesis of the Hebrew Faith":

"As we see Christianity absorbing into itself, and moulding to its own purposes, the rites, days, gods and ideas of the ancient Roman Polytheism; as Mohammedanism is rooted in the fetich-worship of the primitive Arabian tribes, retaining the Mecca-stone and pilgrimage, and many another belief; so (as we study the rise and early development of Judaism,) we see *it* absorbing into itself a multitude of customs, rites and ideas from more primitive religions. As both Christianity and Islam are developed out of Judaism, so was Judaism itself a growth out of the highest forms of Nature-worship known to the Semites, and combined in itself many elements.

The study of Judaism, as other religions are studied, has only just begun. Kuenen is almost the first scholar to show in a clear and a forcible manner the mythological character of the early legends and ideas, and to demonstrate the natural genesis of this as of all other religions. It is evident that much yet remains to be done; but already is the evidence sufficient to show that Judaism had its origin in ancestor and Nature-worship. Its phenomena must henceforth be explained rationally; and they must no longer be separated in any manner from the natural order of the world-faiths. We must see law here, as everywhere, instead of arbitrary will. The myth that Jahveh selected this people, and specially taught them, must be abandoned for that law of evolution in religion, from whose agency the highest things of the spirit are not excluded."—J. T. S.

An extensive traveller is J. M. PEEBLES, M. D., who was formerly a clergyman, and who is now one of the most widely known of Spiritualist lecturers. He has been several times round the world, and has everywhere carefully studied the phenomena of spirit manifestations. He finds believers in every part of the world. In fact, no phase of religious belief has grown so extensively in the last twenty years. It looks a great deal more as if Spiritualism was to become the faith of the world than it did that Christianity would become so thirty years after its inception.

We called attention a few weeks ago to a debate between a Christian and a Buddhist preacher in Ceylon which has been recently published by Mr. PEEBLES under the title of "Buddhism and Christianity Face to Face." We know of no other work that will so clearly give an insight into the actual state of things in the Far-East. Another little work by Mr. PEEBLES is "Christ, the Corner-Stone of Spiritualism." He attempts to prove that Jesus actually said that he performed miracles by aid of spirits. To this we must say, the historic method of study shows that most of Dr. PEEBLES' arguments for the existence of Jesus are worthless, and that the miracles have quite another basis than that of spirit aid. We are glad,

however, to see the Spiritualists willing to acknowledge the good there was in Jesus and to abide by such teaching as his. The real Christ, according to Mr. PEEBLES, is a principle, a universal quickening life. He thinks Jesus was not the Christ, but was filled with a large measure of the Christ-principle. In this we entirely agree with him. We have read this tract with much interest and satisfaction, as showing a healthier and sounder tone in the best Spiritualists than they have ever shown before. Both works are sold by COLBY & RICH, Boston.—G. W. C.

Home Education.—Society to encourage Studies at Home; fifth annual report; 1878; two hundred copies printed; Boston.

In this interesting pamphlet we have summed up the past year's operations of this most excellent and useful society, together with some account of its fifth annual meeting in June last. The object of this society is tersely stated in its title. It aims especially to encourage and direct the self-improvement of those persons who are prevented by circumstances from availing themselves of private tuition or attending the more advanced educational institutions of the land. Its method of advising in the selection and pursuit of studies is by personal correspondence, a series of circulars and working lists, regular monthly reports from the students, together with memory notes, occasional examinations by letter, and the loan of books, specimens, etc.

Concerning the very gratifying success of this enterprise, it is sufficient to quote some of the facts and figures in this report. The total number of students enrolled for the past year was 899, being an increase of fifty-four per cent. for the year. Of this number, 653 persisted and fulfilled the somewhat stringent requirements of the Society, so as to be classed in the final rank list. These students represented, geographically, thirty-four States and Territories, distributed as follows: New England, 311; New York, 183; Middle States, 175; and West and South, 228. Furthermore, 164 entered their names for the second time, a considerable number took two or more courses, and it is estimated that about fourteen per cent. were engaged in teaching. History and English Literature were the favorite courses, and occupied about two-thirds of the whole number of learners. Science and Art had nearly a hundred students each. German and French not so many. The amount of self-sacrificing labor involved in this undertaking may be judged from the fact that the Secretary received 4,174 letters during the year. Besides the officers, there is a committee of ninety-eight ladies (mostly in Boston,) engaged in conducting the operations, and especially the correspondence of the society. The Section on History last year wrote 3,009 letters and sent out 284 examination papers, with a result of 79⅝ per

cent. correct answers. All this work is gratuitous and anonymous. The soul of the enterprise is its Secretary, who is the cultivated and earnest daughter of the late eminent American historian of Spanish Literature.

These interesting and encouraging facts were reported at the annual meeting in Boston, at which some 120 students and 50 ladies of the committee were present. Four essays, selected from a number forwarded by the students, were also read, and it is gratifying to find that three of the successful ones were by Western ladies. The meeting was closed with an address by President ELIOT of Harvard College. The foregoing statement has been prepared for "UNITY" in the hope that some of its readers may be led to avail themselves of the help of this society. Address the Secretary, No. 9 Park St., Boston. —C. W. W.

George Muller and his Prayers —GEORGE MULLER, of Bristol, England, famous for his Orphan House built and supported by "faith", seems to have found his recent tour in this country almost a continual ovation. The evangelical clergymen who for years have been confounding and putting to flight whole armies of "infidels" and 'skeptics" by the mere mention of MULLER's name, seem to have regarded themselves wonderfully favored to be able to get the gentleman alive into their pulpits for a sort of object lesson to their congregations. "Didn't we tell you? There he is—the very man—look at him—you suspected that we were humbugging you when we insisted that prayer 'moves the arm that moves the world,' and that there is no limit to what we can get by asking God for it, if we only have faith enough Behold, then, ye doubters! there are the very lips that prayed hundreds of thousands of pounds sterling out of men's pockets, and great buildings into existence. Doubt again if you can."

We freely admit that we have great interest in the excellent work for English orphans which Mr. MULLER is undoubtedly doing. But we have no symphathy with the superstitious nonsense paraded up and down the earth, that it is all the result of prayer. Suppose Mr. MULLER had gone to China, and *there* had prayed for money to build the institutions which he has built, would his prayers have been answered? Why not? Does not God reside in China? Is he not as able to answer prayer there as in England? Is he not as *willing* to answer prayer there as in England? Or, to make the case easier, suppose Mr. MULLER had set about his enterprise in England, just as he did, only *had not published to the world* that he was praying and what he was praying for, would the money have come? The fact is Mr. MULLER's plan of letting the world know that he was setting out to build an Orphan House and get his money for it "all from God, in answer to prayer without asking any human being for a penny," was the *shrewdest advertising dodge* of this century. Mr. MULLER is doubtless a sincere man,

whose heart is earnestly set on honoring God and blessing humanity. This is much, and for this he deserves honor. But in a good many of his religious ideas he is one of the narrowest and most fanatical of men. As a philanthrophist he is doing good, but as a religionist he is doing great harm. No man in our time has done anything like as much as Mr. MULLER to degrade prayer from its high and proper plane of spiritual communion with God, to the imcomparably lower plane of mere asking for what we want in the direction of physical good. If I am to believe that Mr. MULLER's prayers built his Orphan House, then I must believe also that my prayers, if only I have sufficient faith, will support a church, or endow a college, or restore my sick to health or my dead to life, or keep back a pestilence like the Yellow Fever, or drive away the grasshoppers if I happen to be a Kansas farmer, or bring rain when I think my own and my neighbor's crops need it. But what a farce does this turn prayer into? What a laughing stock in the eyes of intelligent lookers on! No! we can tell our good evangelical friends that if they want to win infidels and skeptics, they are proceeding in quite the wrong way when they quote Mr. MULLER, and his Orphan House, and his prayers to God which he so shrewdly assures the answer of, by taking care that all the Christian world shall hear about them and what they are for. Infidels and skeptics are generally smart enough to see through a wall that has in it as big a hole as that. The way for Christianity to win skeptics and infidels is to throw away a few cart loads of its theological nonsense, these irrational and degrading ideas of prayer among the rest, and begin preaching in place thereof something better.

UNITY, (formerly THE PAMPHLET MISSION) has been established for the purpose of publishing a semi-monthly series of Liberal Religious pamphlets on the Unity, the Evolution, the Doctrines, the Bibles, and the Leaders of Religion; on the Relations of Religion to Science, to Devotion and Conduct, and on kindred topics; written by men whose word combines Liberal thought with religious feeling. Each pamphlet will contain an Essay or Sermon, (original or reprint,) together with from six to ten pages of "Notes and News," made up of short editorials, gleanings from the freshest religious thought, and news-items about Liberal work, Liberal books, etc. It is hoped that the publication will meet the want not only of persons already connected with Liberal organizations, but also, especially, of ISOLATED LIBERALS—the fives and tens and twenties in small towns. Besides its use in the home, it can do service among friends and neighbors, as well as furnish regular material for Sunday meetings and discussions in places hardly to be reached by Liberal preachers.

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